

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method for improving a cereal product, said method comprising
2 (a) contacting said cereal product with substantially pure water or with steam, and
3 (b) drying said cereal product to its original water content,
4 thereby improving reducing the cereal product.
- 1 2. A method of claim 1, wherein said contacting is by spraying water on said cereal
2 product.
- 1 3. A method of claim 1, wherein said contacting is by misting said cereal product with
2 water.
- 1 4. A method of claim 1, wherein said water is at least about 90% pure.
- 1 5. A method of claim 1, wherein said water is between about 50 and about 150° F.
- 1 6. A method of claim 1, wherein said water is between about 70 and about 100° F.
- 1 7. A method of claim 1, wherein said cereal product is a ready-to-eat breakfast cereal.
- 1 8. A method of claim 8, wherein said ready-to-eat breakfast cereal is a flaked cereal.
- 1 9. A method of claim 9, wherein said flaked cereal is selected from the group consisting
2 of a corn flake, a wheat flake, an oat flake, a barley flake, and a rice flake.
- 1 10. A method of claim 1, wherein said cereal product is a fried or baked cereal chip.
- 1 11. A method of claim 10, wherein said fried or baked cereal chip is a corn chip.
- 1 12. A method of claim 10, wherein said fried or baked cereal chip is a tortilla chip.
- 1 13. A method of claim 1, wherein the improvement is an increase in bowl life of a ready-
2 to-eat ("RTE") breakfast cereal.
- 1 14. A method of claim 13, wherein said RTE cereal is selected from a flake, an extruded
2 cereal piece, and a nugget.
- 1 15. A method of claim 14, wherein said RTE cereal is a flake.

1 16. A method for reducing the friability of a potato chip or of freeze-dried food, said
2 method comprising

3 (a) contacting said potato chip or freeze-dried food with water, and

4 (b) drying said potato chip or freeze-dried food to its original water content,
5 thereby reducing its friability.

1 17. A method of claim 16, wherein said contacting is by spraying water on said potato
2 chip or freeze-dried food.

1 18. A method of claim 16, wherein said contacting is by misting said potato chip or
2 freeze-dried food with water.

1 19. A method of claim 16, wherein said water is between about 50 and about 150° F.

1 20. A method of claim 16, wherein said water is between about 70 and about 100 ° F.

1 21. A method for increasing shelf life of a nut, said method comprising

2 (a) contacting said nut with water, and

3 (b) drying said nut to its original water content,
4 thereby increasing its shelf life.

1 22. A method of claim 21, wherein said contacting is by spraying water on said nut.

1 23. A method of claim 21, wherein said contacting is by immersing said nut in water.

1 24. A method of claim 21, wherein said contacting is by pouring water over said nut.

1 25. A method of claim 21, further comprising subjecting said nut to light abrasion in the
2 presence of said water.

1 26. A method of claim 25, wherein said mild abrasion is caused by contacting said nut
2 with a second nut.

1 27. A method of claim 26, wherein said nut is moved against said second nut by placing
2 said nuts in a movable container and moving said container.

1 28. A method of claim 26, wherein said nut is moved against said second nut by placing
2 said nuts on a surface and agitating the nuts.

- 1 29. A method of claim 26, wherein said nut and said second nut are of different types.
- 1 30. A method of claim 21, wherein said nut is a peanut.
- 1 31. A method of claim 21, wherein said nut is selected from the group consisting of
2 almond, cashew, walnut, hazelnut, pecan, macadamia, pistachio, Brazil nut, and filbert.